

GAMERON, SIMON

DRAWER 10B

CABINET

71.2004 C85-02447



Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet

Simon Cameron

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

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Lincoln arrived back in Springfield, after the conference with Hamlin at Chicago, on November 26; and three days later wrote a note to Hamlin stating that he found upon his arrival home, "letters here from very strong and unexpected quarters in Pennsylvania ^{of} uring the appointment of General Cameron to a place in the cabinet." Lincoln then concluded, "Let this be a profound secret."

Springfield, Ill. Dec. 31, 1860
Hon. Simon Cameron

My dear Sir:

I think fit to
notify you now, that by your
permission, I shall, at the pro-
per time, nominate you to the
U. S. Senate, for confirmation
as Secretary of the Treasury, or
as Secretary of War— which of
the two, I have not yet defini-
tely decided— Please answer
at your own earliest convenience—

Yours Obedt Servt
A. Lincoln—

direct
office of the
the cabinet

Cameron, Hon. Simon

Jan. 3, 1861

Springfield, Ill. Jan. 3, 1861
Hon. Simon Cameron

My dear Sir:

When you were here
about the last of December I handed
on you a letter saying I should
at the proper time, nominate you
to ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{the} place in the Cab-
inet— It is due to you, and to truth,
for me to say you were hereby
my invitee, and not upon any
suggestion of your own— You have
not, as yet, signified to me, whether
you would accept the appointment;
and, with much fear, I now say to
you, that you will relieve me from
great embarrassment by allowing
me to recall the offer— This springs
from an unexpected complication, and
not from any change of my view as
to the ability, or faithfulness with

which you would discharge the duties
of the place -

I now think I will not definitely
fix upon any appointment for Penn-
sylvania until I reach Washington -

Yours Obedt Servt.

A. Lincoln.

Purcell's confidence:

Springfield, Ill., Jan. 13. 1861
Hon. Simon Cameron

My dear Sir:

At the suggestion
of Mr. Sanderson, and with hearty
good-will friends, I herewith
send you a letter dated Jan. 3rd —
— the same in date, as the last
you received from me — I thought
best to give it that date, as it is,
in some sort, to take the place
of that letter — I learn, both by a
letter of Mr. Sweet, and from Mr.
Sanderson, that your feelings were
wounded by the terms of my letter
recd. of the 3rd — I wrote that letter
under great anxiety, and per-
haps I was not as guarded in its
terms as I should have been; but I
beg you to be assured, I intended
no offence. My great object was to

Cameron, Hon. Simon.

Jan. 31, 1861

have ^{you} act quickly, - if possible, before
the matter should be complicated with
the Penn. Senatorial election - Destroy
the offensive letter, or return it
to me -

I say to you now ~~that~~ I have
not doubted that you would
perform the duties of a Department
mentally and faithfully -
Nor have I for a moment intended
to ostracize your friends - If I should
make a cabinet appointment for
Penn. before I reach Washing-
ton, I will not do so without
consulting you, and giving all its
weight to your views and wishes
which I consistently can - This
I have always intended -

Yours truly
A. Lincoln.

Lincoln

Jan 13. 1861.

Cameron Mass
Lib. of Congress

Mr. Cameron *Feb. 5 1861*
**Mr. Cameron and Mr. Lincoln's
Cabinet.**

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 3.

The *Sunday Mercury* publishes the conversation had with Mr. Lincoln by the Committee of the Central Republican Club at Springfield, Ill., for the purpose of urging the appointment of Mr. Cameron to his Cabinet. Mr. Lincoln stated a great desire to appoint him, but charges were made from Ohio and the Western States of his corruption in obtaining a contract, which, if proven, must exclude him; but if he vindicates himself he expressed the strongest disposition to appoint him.

Executive Mansion

June 17. 1861

Hon. Sec. of War

My dear Sir

With your concurrence, and that of the Governor of Indiana, I am in favor of accepting into what we call the three year service, any number not exceeding four ^{adventurous} Regiments, from that State. Probably they should come from the triangular region between the Ohio & Wabash rivers, including my own old boyhood home -
Please per Hon. C. M. Allen, Speaker of the Ia. H. R. and unless you perceive good reason:

now to the country, make
up an order for him accord-
ing to the above—

Yours truly
A. Lincoln

HOLOGRAPH LETTER, SIGNED, OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, REFERRING
TO HIS "OLD BOYHOOD HOME" IN SOUTHWESTERN INDIANA.

By Courtesy of Arthur G. Mitten, Goodland, Indiana, Owner of the Original.

Jan. 11, 1862

Private

Executive Mansion,

Washington, Jan. 11.

1862.

Dear Sir

Though I have said nothing hitherto in response to your wish, expressed long since, to resign your seat in the Cabinet, I have not been unmindful of it. I have been only unwilling to consent to a change at a time, and under circumstances which might give occasion to misconstruction, and unable till now to see how such misconstruction could be avoided.

But the desire of Mr. Soley to return home and to offer his services to his country in the field enables me now to gratify your wish, and at the same time evince my personal regard for you, and my confidence in your ability, patriotism, and fidelity to public trust.

I therefore tender to your acceptance, if you still desire to resign your present position, the post of Minister to Russia. Should you accept it, you will bear with you the ^{assurances} ~~words~~ of my undiminished confidence, of my affectionate esteem, and of my sure expectation that, near the great sovereign whose personal and hereditary friendship for the United States,

so much nearer him to Americans, you will be
able to render services to your country, not less im-
portant than those you could render at home,

Very sincerely your friend
A. Lincoln

LINCOLN AND CAMERON.

CAMERON'S EXCEPTIONAL SENATORIAL HONORS IN PENNSYLVANIA.

First Man Four Times Chosen—His Candidacy for President in 1860—His Battle for the Cabinet—The Sanderson Compact With Davis at Chicago—Lincoln Tendered Cameron a Cabinet Portfolio and Revoked It Three Days Later—The Convulsive Contest in Pennsylvania—Visit to Lincoln and What He Said—Cameron and Slavery—His Report as War Minister Recalled by Lincoln and Revised on Arming Slaves—The True Story of Cameron's Retirement from the Cabinet—The Wonderful Political Power Cameron Created in Pennsylvania.

Abraham Lincoln had more varied and complicated relations with Simon Cameron than with any other Pennsylvanian during his Presidential term. Indeed, Cameron fills more pages in the annals of Pennsylvania politics than any citizen of the State since the organization of our Government. He is the only man who was four times elected to the United States Senate by the Pennsylvania Legislature until his son attained the same distinction as his successor, and he would have won a fifth election without a serious contest had he not voluntarily resigned to assure the succession to his son. Without great popular following, he was the most conspicuous of all our Pennsylvania politicians, measured by the single standard of success in obtaining political honors and power.

Cameron was a Senator when Lincoln served his single term in Congress, but they did not become even acquaintances, and he first became involved in Lincoln's political life in 1860, when both were candidates for the Republican nomination for President. Cameron's candidacy was not regarded as a serious effort to nominate him, but the peculiar political situation in Pennsylvania greatly favored him in making himself the candidate of the State, and, with his sagacity and energy in political affairs, he was not slow to avail himself of it. Curtin was the prominent candidate for Governor, and Cameron the chief opponent. Curtin commanded the nomination for Governor, and naturally enough desired a united party to assure his election. Cameron secured a majority of votes in the State Convention for President, and reasonably claimed that he was as much entitled to the united support of the party for President as Curtin was entitled to it for Governor. The conflict between the two elements of the party led to a compromise, by which a nearly united delegation was given to Cameron for a complimentary vote for President. Cameron himself believed in after years that he could have been nominated and elected if he had been heartily backed by Pennsylvania Republicans. He many times chided me for refusing to give him an earnest support, saying that he could have been made a successful candidate, and then, to use his own expressive language, "We could all have had everything we wanted." While Cameron had a majority of the delegation, a large minority was more or less bitterly opposed to him, and his name was withdrawn in the Convention after the first ballot, because the delegation would have broken. The man who immediately represented Cameron on that occasion was John P. Sanderson, who was subsequently appointed to the regular army, and Alexander Cummings, whose confused use of military authority conferred upon him in the early part of the war led to a vote of censure upon Cameron by Congress. They knew before the Convention met that the contest was narrowed down to Seward and Lincoln and that Cameron, Chase, and Bates were not in the fight. Sanderson and Cummings, with little or no control of the delegation, were early in negotiation with David Davis, who was specially in charge of Lincoln's tutorage in Chicago, and obtained Davis's positive assurance that if the Pennsylvania delegation

would support Lincoln and Lincoln succeeded to the Presidency, Cameron would be appointed Secretary of the Treasury. This agreement was not made known at the time to any in the delegation, nor did it become known to Lincoln, at least as a positive obligation, until after the election.

The success of Lincoln at the November election left the political situation in Pennsylvania without change, except that the war of factions was intensified. Curtin did not give even a perfunctory support to Cameron for the Presidency, and Cameron gave about the same sort of support to Curtin for Governor, and when it was announced, about the first of January, that Cameron had been to Springfield, and had returned with the proffer of a Cabinet portfolio, it immediately inspired the most aggressive opposition to his appointment. I was not in sympathy with Cameron, and promptly telegraphed Lincoln, protesting against his appointment, to which Lincoln answered, urging me to come immediately to Springfield. When I met Lincoln he frankly informed me that on the last day of December he had given Cameron a letter tendering to him a position in the Cabinet, leaving the right to decide whether it should be Secretary of the Treasury or Secretary of War. I explained to the President, with all the ardor of an intense partisan in the factional feud, that the appointment of Cameron would be a misfortune to the party in Pennsylvania and a misfortune to the President that he might regret after his inauguration. It is needless now to review the causes which led to this active and embittered hostility of the friends of Curtin to Cameron's political advancement. It is sufficient to say that there was persistent war between these elements, and the usual political demoralization that followed. In such conflicts was painfully visible from the factional battles of that time. I saw that Lincoln was very much disturbed by the situation in which he had become involved, and he discussed every phase of it with unusual frankness and obvious and profound feeling. I did not then know that Lincoln had been pledged, without his knowledge, by his friends to the appointment of Cameron, nor did Lincoln intimate it to me during our conversation. After an hour or more of discussion on the subject Lincoln dismissed it by saying that he would advise me further within a very few days.

I left Lincoln conscious that I had seriously impressed him with my views, but entirely unable to form any judgment as to what might be his ultimate action. Although I left him as late as 11 o'clock in the evening, he wrote me a letter dated the same day, and it began with this sentence: "Since seeing you, things have developed which make it impossible for me to do so, and in the meantime he added: "You will say this comes from an interview with McClure, and this is partly true, but wholly untrue; the matter is wholly outside of Pennsylvania, yet I am not at liberty to specify. Enough that it appears to me to be sufficient. He followed with the suggestion that Cameron should decline the appointment, stating that if the declaration was forwarded he would "not object to its being known to the public" and to him. He concluded by saying, "No person living knows, or has an intimation, that I wrote this letter," and with a postscript asking Cameron to telegraph the words "All right." Lincoln also wrote me a letter of a single sentence, dated the same night, asking that the charges against Cameron should be put in tangible shape for his consideration. I am unable to quote literally any of the letters, but I can say that the subject, as all of my many letters received from him, and the correspondence relating to the campaign and the organization of the Administration that I had preserved, were destroyed when Chambersburg was burned by McCausland in 1864. I answered Lincoln's concluding note by agreeing to appoint an individual prosecutor of Cameron, and his request for the formulation of Cameron's military, political and personal delinquencies was not complied with.

Lincoln's letter to Cameron tendering him the Cabinet appointment had been shown to some confidential friends whose entire system outstripped their discretion, they made public the fact that Cameron was an assured member of the Cabinet. The second day after from Lincoln to Cameron, recalling the tender of a Cabinet office, was not made public and needless to say, it was not taken up by the small and trusted circle of Cameron's associates, but it soon became known that Lincoln regarded the question as unsettled, and that led to exhaustive efforts on both sides to oppose and to promote Cameron's appointment. Sanderson, who had made the compact at Chicago, and Davis's son, who was in the Government, was sent at once to Springfield to enforce its fulfillment. He resolutely complained that the letter was a gratuitous revoking the appointment was offensive, blunt and needed explanation, as it gave no reason whatever for the sudden change in his judgment. While Sanderson and other prominent Pennsylvanians who visited Lincoln at the same time failed to obtain from him any

assurance of his purpose to appoint Cameron, Lincoln was prevailed upon on the 13th of January, ten days after he had written the letter revoking the appointment, to write a confidential letter to Cameron, in which he stated unguarded terms in which he had expressed himself, and giving the assurance that he intended to appoint a new letter, enclosed to Cameron a new letter, antedated Jan. 3, which he suggested that Cameron should use as an original, and that date and destroy or return the one that had given offence. In this letter he said: "You have not as yet signified to me whether you would accept the appointment, and with much pain I now say to you that you will relieve me from great embarrassment by allowing me to reconsider the offer." The letter in which the antedated letter was enclosed gave Cameron only this assurance as to Lincoln's purpose: "If I should make a Cabinet appointment for Pennsylvania before I reach Washington I will not do so without consulting you and giving all the weight to your views as I can give." I can only say that none of these letters was made public by Cameron, but it was well understood that it was when it was sent to the friends of Lincoln in Pennsylvania was convulsed, that struggle from the last of January until the Cabinet was announced after the inauguration.

When Lincoln arrived in Washington the five members of the Cabinet who had been positively chosen were Messrs. Seward, Bates, Chase and Blair, and the question of the appointment of Cameron and Blair was definitely determined until the day before the inauguration, and then the Cameron issue was decided by the President's decision to appoint Seward. They were greatly disappointed that Cameron had failed to deliver the Pennsylvania election, and they were not without reason to expect, but they were intensely embittered against Curtin because he and Lane had both openly declared at Chicago that Seward's nomination would be a disaster to the party. Looking back upon that contest with the clearer insight that the lapse of thirty years must give, I do not doubt that the party differences by calling his Presidential competitors around him, and that opened the way for Cameron. He acted with entire sincerity, and he was not without reason for Cameron's appointment made by many who were entitled to respect, he felt that he was not free from the influence of the name of Davis at Chicago to make Cameron a member of his Cabinet. The appointment was made under the impression that the pledge probably resolved Lincoln's doubts in Cameron's favor, and he was accepted as a minister of war. That there was some degree of mutual distrust between Cameron and Lincoln was a necessity from the circumstances surrounding the selection; but as there was no larger element of distrust between Lincoln and any of his Cabinet officers, Cameron's relations with the President were little more than those of a subordinate. Relations of his brother constitutional advisers with their chief, and Cameron's practical views of the grave emergency in which the Administration was placed, were of more value to Lincoln at times than were the counsels of most of the Cabinet. Every member had his own theory of how to meet the crisis, from peaceable dismemberment of the republic to aggressive war, while Lincoln had no policy but to await events and counselled with all and trusted none. Cameron entered the Cabinet, therefore, with about equal opportunity among his associates to win and to lose. He was not a member of the Government within less than a year was not due to any prejudices or apprehensions which may have been entertained by the bitter struggle against his appointment.

Had the most capable, experienced, and upright man in the country been chosen as Secretary of the War Department when Lincoln was inaugurated in 1861, it would have been impossible for him to administer that office without neglecting his duties as Secretary of War, unprepared for war. It was without arms, without guns, without munitions of war; just as the Government was unprepared to meet an already well-organized Confederate army. Contracts had to be made with such haste as to leave no room for the exercise of sound discretion for obtaining the supplies the country needed; and Cameron, with his peculiar political surroundings, with a hostile public opinion, and with a Government was compelled either to reject the confident expectation of his friends or to submit to a position of weakness and to a Government of delegated authority. It was soon brought under the severest criticism of leading journals and statesmen of his own party, and representatives of the press, now and then made public an investigation of the alleged abuses of the War Department, which resulted in a scathing report of the Government's failure in administering the office and a vote of censure upon Cameron by the House. Lincoln promptly explained to the country that the policy that always characterized him by sending a special message to the House, exculpating Cameron because the act for which he was criticised had not been deliberately committed by Cameron, but were largely acts for which the President and Cabinet were equally responsible. Seward, Bates, Chase,

later the House expunged the resolution of censure. Notwithstanding the message of Lincoln lessening the burden of reproach cast upon Cameron by the House, popular distrust was very general as to the administration of the War Department, and the demands for Cameron's removal grew in both power and intensity. He was not accused of individual corruption, but the severe strain put upon the national credit led to the severest criticisms of all manner of public profligacy, and it culminated in a formal appeal to the President from leading financial men of the country for an immediate change in the Minister of War.

I have no reason to believe that Lincoln would have appointed a new Secretary of War had not public considerations made it imperative. His personal relations with Cameron were as pleasant as his relations with any other of his Cabinet officers, and in many respects Cameron was doubtless a valuable advisor because of his clear, practical common sense and views of public affairs. Both were mistaken as to magnitude of the war after the surrender of Sumter. When the first call for 75,000 troops was made, many of the States tendered volunteers largely in excess of their respective quotas. These were uniformly declined by the Secretary of War, under instructions from the President. What afterward became the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, that made such famous records in the fighting of the great battles in the army of the Potomac, was tendered to the Government for three years' service by Gen. Curtis, but the troops were refused, as Secretary Cameron stated, because the Government would accept loss of an Pennsylvania quota rather than more. These troops had been called under a requisition made upon the State by Gen. Patterson, then in command of the Department of Pennsylvania, when Washington was cut off from the North by the burning of the Gunpowder bridges near Baltimore. Having been refused by the Secretary of War, they were organized as a State force, and were frantically called for by Lincoln and Cameron after the battle of Bull Run. The Pennsylvania Reserves then marched down Pennsylvania avenue to assure the safety of the capital the morning after McDowell's army had retreated into the Washington trenches.

The one vital issue that Cameron very early appreciated was that of slavery. As early as May, 1861, he wrote to Gen. Butler, instructing him to refrain from surrendering to their masters all slaves who came within his lines, and to employ them in the services to which they may be best adapted. That was the first step taken by the Administration toward the overthrow of slavery. In August of the same year Gen. Fremont issued a proclamation in Missouri, declaring the slaves of all those in the Confederate service to be forever free, which was a direct emancipation of all slaves in Missouri. Lincoln at once revoked the Fremont order and sent Secretary Cameron and the Adjutant General personally to examine into the situation in Missouri and report upon it. Cameron obviously sympathized with Fremont's emancipation ideas, and instead of delivering to Fremont the order for removal prepared before he left Washington, he finally decided to bring it back with him and to give Fremont the opportunity to strike himself. Lincoln, always patient, yielded to Fremont's importunities, and permitted him to remain in command until October, when he sent Gen. Curtis in person to deliver the order of removal with the single condition that if Fremont "shall then have, in personal command fought and won a battle, or shall then be actually in battle, or shall then be in the immediate presence of the enemy in expectation of a battle, it is not to be delivered, but held for further orders." As Fremont was not near a battle, he was relieved of his command. Cameron pressed the slavery issue to the extent of a flaccid outburst upon his chief by recommending the arming of slaves in his first annual report, without the knowledge of the President, and sending it out in printed form to the Postmasters of the country for delivery to the newspapers after having been presented to Congress. The slavery question had then become an important political theme, and politicians were shaping their lines to get into harmony with it. In his report, Cameron declared in unqualified terms in favor of arming the slaves for military service. Lincoln was not only shocked but greatly grieved when he learned the character of Cameron's recommendation, and he at once ordered that the copies be recalled by telegraph, the report revised, and a new edition printed. Cameron submitted as gracefully as possible and revised his report, limiting his recommendation about slaves to the suggestion that they should not be returned to their masters. While this episode did not produce unfriendly personal relations between Lincoln and Cameron, it certainly was a severe strain upon Lincoln's trust in the fidelity of his War Minister; but Lincoln was too wise to put himself in open antagonism to the anti-slavery sentiment of the country by removing Cameron for his offensive and surreptitious anti-slavery report. The financial pressure for Cameron's removal would probably have been accomplished if under any circumstances, and Lincoln waited more than a month after the flurry over Cameron's report.

There have been many and conflicting accounts given to the public of Cameron's retirement from the Lincoln Cabinet, not one of which is wholly correct, and most of them are

incorrect in vital particulars. Cameron had verbally assured the President when censured by Congress, and again when the dispute arose over his annual report, that his resignation was at Lincoln's disposal at any time, but he had no knowledge of Lincoln's purpose to make a change in the War Department until he received Lincoln's letter in January, 1862, informing him of the change. In Nicolay and Hay's life of Lincoln (volume 3), page 124, it is given what purports to be the letter delivered to Cameron notifying him of the change. Lincoln certainly wrote that letter, as his biographers have published it from his manuscript, but it is not the letter that was delivered to Cameron. Lincoln sent his letter to Cameron by Chase, who met Cameron late in the evening after he had dined with Col. Forney, and he delivered the letter in entire ignorance of its contents. It happened to be spending the evening with Col. Thomas A. Scott, then Cameron's Assistant Secretary of War, when Cameron came in near the midnight hour and exhibited an extraordinary degree of emotion. He laid the letter down upon Scott's table and invited us both to read it, saying that it meant personal as well as political destruction, and was an irretrievable wrong committed upon him by the President. We were not then, and indeed never had been, in political sympathy, but our friendly personal relations had never been interrupted. He appealed to me, saying: "This is not a political matter; it means personal degradation, and, while we do not agree politically, you know I would gladly aid you personally, if it would increase your power. Cameron was affected even to tears, and wept bitterly over what he regarded as a personal affront from Lincoln. I remember not only the substance of Lincoln's letter, but its language almost, if not quite, literally, as follows: "I have this day nominated Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, Minister Secretary of War and you to be Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia." Although the message did not go to the Senate that day, it had been prepared and was sent in pursuance of that notice. Col. Scott, who was a man of great versatility of resources, at once suggested that Lincoln did not intend personal offense to Cameron, and in that I fully agreed; and it was then and there arranged that on the following day Lincoln should be asked to withdraw the offensive letter, to permit Cameron to antedate a letter of resignation, and for Lincoln to write kind acceptance of the same. The letter delivered by Chase was recalled, a new correspondence was prepared, and a month later given to the public.

Cameron had no knowledge or even suspicion of Stanton succeeding him. Chase and Seward, as well as Cameron, have claimed direct or indirect influence in the selection of Stanton, but there was not a single member of the Cabinet who knew of Stanton's appointment until Lincoln notified Cameron of the change. Stanton had been in open, malignant opposition to the Administration only a few months before, but he was then the closest friend and personal counsellor of Gen. McClellan; was in hearty sympathy with the war; was resolutely and aggressively honest, and Lincoln chose him without consulting anyone, as far as I have ever been able to learn, unless it was Gen. McClellan. One of the many good results he expected from Stanton as War Minister was entire harmony between him and the General commanding the armies. Cameron well concealed his disappointment at the manner of his retirement from the Cabinet; wisely maintained personal relations with Lincoln, and when he returned from Russia, after less than a year of service as Minister, resumed active political life, and was one of the earliest of the political leaders to foresee that the people would force the re-nomination of Lincoln, regardless of the favor or disfavor of politicians. The early movement in January 1864, in which Curtis cordially cooperated, by which the unanimous re-nomination of the Republican members of the Pennsylvania Legislature was given for Lincoln's re-nomination, was suggested by Cameron; and Lincoln, with a sagacity that never failed him, took the earliest opportunity to attach himself so firmly to his cause that separation would be impossible. His first movement in that line was the Cameron mission to Fortress Monroe to offer to accept the Vice-Presidency. This was in March, '64, and Cameron was one of the very few whom Lincoln consulted about the Vice-Presidency until he finally settled upon the nomination of Johnson, in which Cameron reluctantly concurred, and he went to the Baltimore Convention as a delegate at large to execute Lincoln's wishes. He became Chairman of the Republican State Committee in Pennsylvania, and although he would have been in very close relations with Lincoln during his second term had his life been spared.

A. K. McCLURE

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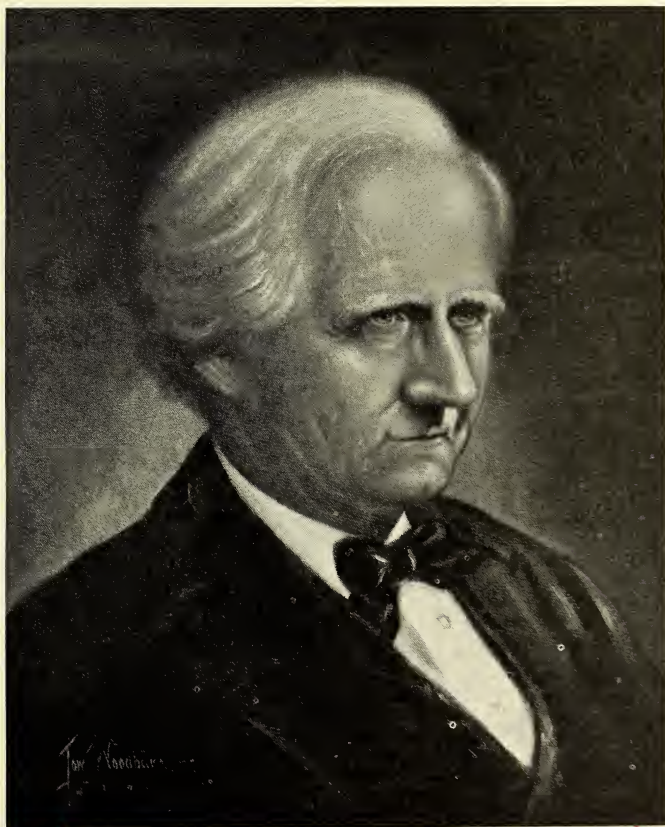
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From Painting by Tom Woodburn

SIMON CAMERON, Secretary of War, 1861—1862

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NEWS

Recruiting Publicity Bureau, Governors Island, N. Y.

An Army Information Bulletin, containing a resume of administrative and statistical reports, rules, regulations, and official notices of recruiting for the guidance of members of the Regular Army, National Guard and Organized Reserves.

Permission to reprint any articles of the *Recruiting News* is authorized without any obligation.

July 15, 1932

SIMON CAMERON

Simon Cameron, twenty-eighth Secretary of War of the United States, is portrayed on the front cover of this issue of the *Recruiting News*. The life story of this man—often called the “Czar of Pennsylvania Politics”—could well serve as a plot for more than one narrative of the Horatio Alger “success” type. Born of poverty stricken parents—his father was a struggling country tailor—he vaulted over one obstruction after another until, before his death after half a century of political prominence, he had held some of the highest offices in the land, and had amassed an immense fortune through successful business ventures.

He was born at Mayfield, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, March 8, 1799. Thrown upon the world at an early age, a kindly physician adopted him, and determined to educate and train the waif until he became worthy of inheriting the doctor's practice. Apt and interested, the boy absorbed “book knowledge” quickly, but balked at the prospect of a medical career. He accordingly apprenticed himself to a printer. Early realizing the “power of the press,” he resolved to become a newspaper man himself, and devoted all of his power to that end. He was but twenty-one years old when he became the successful editor of an almost defunct newspaper in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

Anxious to learn politics, he then travelled to Washington and found employment with Gales and Seaton, publishers of the Congressional Record. There he gained the friendship of Monroe, Calhoun, and later of Jackson.

He returned to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1824, and found means to purchase the Republican—a newspaper with which he had already been connected—and rechristened it the *Intelligencer*. His bold editorial policy attracted attention, and circulation rapidly mounted. The newspaper was a profitable enterprise, but the period—one of extensive internal improvements—promised greater financial remuneration, and he quit the publishing field. He built several sections of the Pennsylvania canal, and laid a network of railroad which he later united as the Northern Central system.

In 1832 he opened the Bank of Middletown, with himself as its cashier. He branched into a diversity of projects, handling each with the utmost efficiency and financial success. He retained his interest in politics throughout, and is credited with the manipulation which resulted, eventually,

in the renomination of Andrew Jackson in 1832. With Cameron's aid, Buchanan was elected to the Senate in 1833, at a time when, despairing of political success, he was contemplating a return to his law practice. In 1841, he helped Van Buren in securing nomination for vice president.

Prior to 1838, Cameron himself held no public office other than that of adjutant general of his state. In that year, however, he was appointed a commissioner to settle certain claims of the Winnebago Indians. Some scandal arose from these activities, in that he paid many claims with notes on his own bank. His political influence temporarily suffered but was quickly renewed with increased vigor.

By a coalition of “native Americans,” Whigs, and Protectionist Democrats, Cameron was elected in 1845 to the Senate seat vacated by Buchanan, upon the latter's appointment to President Polk's cabinet. Four years later his attempt to gain Democratic support for renomination was unsuccessful, and he failed. In 1854, as a member of the “Know Nothing” party, he failed again. In 1856, he joined the “People's” party, as the new Republican group was first called in Pennsylvania, and the following year returned to the Senate as a Republican. There were three Democratic votes in his favor, and these gave rise to suspicions of bribery, but such were not substantiated. From that time onward, Simon Cameron remained a Republican, and devoted much time to building up a smoothly working party machine in his state. He was sometimes challenged but the control remained in his hands.

In 1860, he was prominent first as a candidate for the presidential, and later for the vice presidential nomination. Realizing, however, that he stood but small chance of victory, he used his influence in favor of Abraham Lincoln. The day following the inauguration, President Lincoln appointed him head of the War Department.

Secretary Cameron's administration of the War Office at that critical time was characterized by his customary vigor but was unfortunately marred by his partiality in the letting of contracts—a matter which caused many demands for his removal, and for which he was later censured by the House of Representatives. In the department, he was aggressive, and advocated more stringent measures than even Lincoln was prepared to carry out. His proposals were usually rejected by the cabinet, and, realizing that his usefulness was crippled, he suggested Edwin McMasters Stanton as his successor, and tendered his own resignation.

President Lincoln appointed him, in January, 1862, as Minister to Russia. He remained overseas only long enough to secure the friendship of Russia for the Union during the war, and returned home in time to be defeated as a candidate for the Senate. In 1867, however, he was again elected and for the next ten years reigned supreme as the “Czar of Pennsylvania Politics.” In 1873, his return to the Senate was without contest. He became a power in Grant's administration, and in 1876 obtained the appointment of his son, James Donald Cameron, as Secretary of War.

The next year he closed his political career by a bold stroke, resigning from the Senate only after securing assurance from the Pennsylvania legislature of the election of his son to fill the vacancy. The son, in full control of the state's machine, was reelected three times during the older man's lifetime. Simon Cameron died after twelve years of retirement, June 26, 1889, at Mayfield, Pennsylvania.

War, reckless war, is upon us and the word is out in every section of the globe to "get all you can while the getting is good." The world is full of looters, and 'twas ever thus.

Lincoln had his troubles during the Civil War. Human nature has not changed. As in Daniel's time so today the Belshazzers all over the land are "Weighed in the balance and found wanting."

Thad Stevens went to President Lincoln to protest against an intended favor to Secretary of War Cameron whom he called dishonest. (The pot called the kettle black.)

"You don't mean," said Lincoln, "that Cameron would steal?"

"No," replied Stevens, "I don't think he would steal a red hot stove."

Lincoln passed the remark along to Cameron who was made very angry and demanded a retraction.

Stevens made it in this fashion: "Mr. Lincoln, Cameron is very mad about what I said and made me promise to retract. I will now do so. I told you that I didn't think Cameron would steal a red hot stove. I now take that back."

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SIMON CAMERON — SECRETARY OF WAR

Simon Cameron was by far the most influential political leader which the state of Pennsylvania produced during the middle part of the nineteenth century and was considered one of the most astute statesmen in all American history. Like so many successful leaders in the field of politics his ownership of newspapers opened the way for his political adventures. His first appointment was received in 1826 from J. Andrew Shutz, governor of Pennsylvania, who made him adjutant general of the state. It was this early office which caused him throughout his life to be known as General Cameron.

First elected to the United States Senate in 1845 as a Democrat and later in 1857 as a Republican he came into the stretch for the Presidential nomination race in 1860 as a strong contender and it was in this contest that his name first became associated with that of Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln must have often seen Cameron in Washington while both were in the thirtieth Congress. The fact that Cameron was a senator from the populous state of Pennsylvania and Lincoln a freshman in the House of Representatives coming from Illinois may not have brought them together. There does not seem to be any evidence that they were acquainted.

The names of Cameron and Lincoln were first brought together in the fall of 1859 when there was an effort on the part of Cameron's friends to run the Pennsylvanian for the presidency. It is evidence of Lincoln's political status, nationally, that the wise Pennsylvania politicians selected Lincoln as the potential running mate for Cameron and he was immediately put forth for that office. A Chicago paper however observing the announcement of a Cameron-Lincoln ticket stated that the ticket was "wrong end to" and that it should be reversed to Lincoln and Cameron. Although little or no encouragement was forthcoming from Lincoln with respect to this move a pamphlet of eight pages was printed by the Chicago Cameron and Lincoln Club and published in January 1860 under the caption *Address of the Cam-*

eron and Lincoln Club of the city of Chicago, Illinois to the People of the Northwest.

This movement it will be observed was previous to Lincoln's appearance at Cooper Institute in New York City on February 27, 1860, where he was to be courted by the Seward interests for the same vice-presidential roll. He stopped on February 25 in Philadelphia enroute to New York and Cam-

SIMON CAMERON

Born, Lancaster County, Penn., March 8, 1799
Journeyman printer at Lancaster, Harrisburg and Washington
Editor of newspaper at Doylestown and Harrisburg
Adjutant General of Pennsylvania, 1826
Elected to U. S. Senate as a Democrat, 1845
Became identified with the People's Party, 1854
Elected to U. S. Senate as a Republican, 1857
Candidate for nomination as President at Republican Convention, 1860
Appointed Secretary of War, 1861
Advocated arming fugitive slaves, 1861
Resigned as Secretary of War, Jan. 11, 1862

eron and David Wilmot sent him an invitation to visit them at their hotel. Lincoln called at the Girard Hotel but they were out. He sent a card from New York the following day stating:

"I regret being so near, we did not meet but hope we may yet meet before a great while."

Apparently it was not until after his election that Lincoln met Cameron and then it was at Lincoln's own solicitation that Cameron came to Springfield the last of December for a conference on cabinet positions. Cameron left Springfield on December 31 with the following letter in hand.

"I think fit to notify you now, that by your permission I shall at the proper time nominate you to the U. S. Senate for confirmation as Secretary of the Treasury or as Secretary of War—which of the two I have not definitely decided. Please answer at your earliest convenience."

Three days later however and before Cameron had replied Lincoln withdrew his offer stating that it was "not from any change of my views as to the ability or faithfulness with which you would discharge the duties of the place." Another letter ten days later reveals a hornet's nest had been stirred up in Pennsylvania politics by the suggestion of Cameron as a cabinet member, presumably as a nominee for Secretary of the Treasury.

Cameron had been serving as Secretary of War but a short time before he was just as anxious to get out as he had been to get in. The correspondence which passed from Lincoln to Cameron on January 11, 1862, only about 10 months after his appointment is of special interest because Lincoln again confirms his statement made a year previous that he had explicit confidence in Cameron. In fact Lincoln makes it clear that he would have consented to relieve Cameron earlier as the Secretary had requested had he not felt it would have been misunderstood.

In the famous personal letter of January 11, 1862, Mr. Lincoln advises Cameron that the return of Mr. Clay from Russia enables him to make the appointment as minister to Russia and "at the same time evince my personal regard for you, and my confidence in your ability, patriotism, and fidelity to public trust . . . you will bear with you the assurance of my undiminished confidence, of my affectionate esteem."

It is doubtful if any of the other cabinet members received a more complimentary endorsement and it makes one feel that possibly there might be said at least one good word for Cameron or Lincoln was greatly deceived.



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JAMES SPEED, A PERSONALITY INDEED

James Speed, Lincoln's second Attorney General and the brother of his good friend Joshua, is one of the more shadowy figures in Lincoln's official family. Historians often write his appointment to the cabinet off as cronyism, his tenure in office was brief, and no biographer has ever taken up Speed's cause. His grandson, also named James Speed, did publish a volume entitled *James Speed: A Personality* (Louisville: Press of John P. Morton, 1914), which stitched together excerpts from his grandfather's correspondence, but it is adequate only to whet the appetite. Speed was an independent and intelligent man, more astute politically and closer to Lincoln's Republican principles than his brother Joshua. Joshua was a gentleman farmer and a real estate broker; James was a lawyer and a politician, though for most of his life a politician without a constituency.

As early as 1859, when James Speed, like most Southerners, had been driven into the Democratic party for want of any other place to go, he was independent and shrewd enough to realize that Abraham Lincoln posed no real threat to Southern constitutional rights. Lincoln had engaged in a wrangle with Joshua over Republican policies and "Bleeding Kansas" in 1855, but James could write Lincoln four years later and say, "that tho a democrat, I would not have sorrowed at your election to the U.S. Senate — I feel that our rights and institutions would not have been in jeopardy in your hands." By contrast, Joshua, even when he congratulated Lincoln on his nomination for the Presidency in 1860, reminded him that he was "a warm personal friend" but "a political opponent."

James Speed had served one term in the Kentucky Legislature over a decade before the Civil War, but he became so identified with opposition to slavery that he never had a Kentucky constituency again until the war. When he wrote Lincoln in 1859, it was to send him a pamphlet by Louisville's Judge S.S. Nicholas which embodied a bizarre proposal to eliminate the role of political parties in selecting the President. The plan would have

given each state one Presidential elector per million of population. These electors, once chosen, would be divided into six classes and each class would nominate a person. Of these six, two names would be drawn by lot, and the electors would choose which of the two would be President. The other would be Vice-President.

When war broke out, James and Joshua became leaders of pro-Union sentiment and activity in Kentucky. James gained election to the Kentucky Senate. Though he mildly protested General John C. Frémont's emancipation proclamation in Missouri in 1861, James Speed soon introduced a measure in the Kentucky Legislature for confiscation of the estates of rebels. The bill was doomed in part because James introduced

it. "I am regarded as ultra," he told Lincoln, "almost an abolitionist, and of course any thing from me on the subject of slavery is regarded with suspicion." When his bill did not provide for the state to sell confiscated slaves with the rest of confiscated property, legislators asked why. The "state never should sell a human being by my vote," Speed explained. This remark produced "much excitement." "This I have told you," Speed wrote Lincoln, "that you may form some idea of how sensitive our people are upon this subject." Then, characteristically, Speed drew back, telling Lincoln, "You must not infer from what I have said that the pro-slavery feeling in this state is all controlling." There was "a growing hatred of the southern traitors in Kentucky," and this hatred "must soon embrace the institutions" of the Southern traitors.

Joshua Speed was so agitated by Frémont's proclamation that he was "unable to eat or sleep." Though he "and a few others" would be left alone to fight for the Union, the proclamation would essentially "crush out every vestige of a union party in the state." He reminded Lincoln that all "who live in Slave states," whether Unionist or not in sentiment, "have great fear of insurrection." To allow "negroes to be emancipated & remain among us" would have the same ef-



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. James Speed.

Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. I have quoted from the following: Jonas to Lincoln, September 16, 1854; July 30, 1858; July 20, 1860; and December 30, 1860.

Further information on Jonas is available in Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951).

RECENT ACQUISITIONS: "STRONG'S DIME CARICATURES"

FIGURES 2-5 (below). The Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum recently purchased a series of four poster cartoons published by Thomas W. Strong of New York in 1861. Strong was a prolific producer of prints, noted especially for being the first employer of Louis Maurer, the genius behind the early political cartoons of Currier &

Ives. Harry T. Peters in *America on Stone* noted a strain of originality in the work of Strong's firm, and the series of four "Dime Caricatures" pictured here certainly reveal a taste for good workmanship and for variety in political cartooning. The caricatures must have been printed about March, 1861. All deal with the secession crisis. The Lincoln cartoon has been pictured in Rufus Rockwell Wilson's *Lincoln in Caricature*, but Wilson did not note that the cartoon was part of a series or publish the others in the series.

STRONG'S DIME CARICATURES.—No. 1.



DOMESTIC TROUBLES.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

STRONG'S DIME CARICATURES.—No. 2.



LITTLE BO-PEEP AND HER FOOLISH SHEEP.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

